

2017 national curriculum assessments

Early years foundation stage

Early years foundation stage profile 2017 handbook

October 2016



**Standards
& Testing
Agency**

Contents

Summary	6
Expiry or review date	6
Who is this publication for?	6
Main points	6
1. Introduction	7
1.1 Overview	7
Practitioners	7
Local authorities	7
1.2 Statutory information	8
The Childcare Act Section 39(1) (a) 2006	8
Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage	8
Assessment and reporting arrangements	8
Funding for statutory moderation	8
2. EYFS profile: purposes, principles and processes	9
2.1 Purposes and main uses	9
2.2 Principles of EYFS profile assessments	10
How an EYFS profile is completed	10
Observational assessment	11
Responsible pedagogy	11
Child-initiated activity	12
Embedded learning and secure development	12
Links in the areas of learning	12
Practitioner knowledge	13
Contributions to the assessments	13
2.3 EYFS profile assessment processes	13
Judging whether to use the 'expected' category	14
2.4 Evidence and documentation of the EYFS profile	14
2.5 Transition to year 1	15
3. Inclusion and the EYFS profile	17
3.1 Overview	17
3.2 Taking account of the needs of individual children	17

3.3 Children with special educational needs and disability	17
3.4 Children for whom English is not their home language	18
3.5 Children from minority groups	19
3.6 Transition conversations for children with an outcome at the 'emerging' level	20
4. Completing the EYFS profile	21
4.1 Overview	21
4.2 Exceptions and exemptions	21
4.3 Making EYFS profile assessments	21
4.4 Recording children's attainment	22
4.5 Characteristics of effective learning	22
Playing and exploring – engagement	23
Active learning – motivation	23
Creating and thinking critically	24
4.6 Reporting the EYFS profile assessment	24
5. Exemplification of early years foundation stage profile	26
5.1 Exemplification materials	26
5.2 Using the exemplification materials	26
6. Early learning goals	28
6.1 Prime areas of learning and their associated ELGs	28
Communication and language development	28
Physical development	28
Personal, social and emotional development	29
6.2 Specific areas of learning and their associated ELGs	29
Literacy	29
Mathematics	30
Understanding of the world	30
Expressive arts and design	30
7. Moderation of the EYFS profile	32
7.1 Purpose of moderation	32
7.2 Internal moderation	32
7.3 Inter-school moderation	33
7.4 Local authority moderation	33

Responsibilities	33
How local authorities are moderated	34
8. Quality assurance of EYFS profile data	37
8.1 Overview	37
8.2 Pattern of outcomes for an individual child	37
8.3 Schools and settings' responsibilities	38
Headteachers and managers	38
Practitioners and year 1 teachers	39
8.4 Local authority responsibilities	39
Data collection	39
8.5 Statements to support level setting	40
Statement 1	40
Statement 2	41
Statement 3	41
Statement 4	41
Statement 5	41
Statement 6	41
9. Areas of learning: 'exceeding' descriptors	42
9.1 Prime areas of learning	42
Communication and language	42
Physical development	43
Personal, social and emotional development	43
9.2 Specific areas of learning	44
Literacy	44
Mathematics	44
Understanding the world	45
Expressive arts and design	45
10. Completing commentaries for the characteristics of effective learning	46
10.1 Example lines of enquiry	46
Playing and exploring – engagement	46
Active learning - motivation	46
Creating and thinking critically	47

11. Definitions	49
11.1 Settings	49
11.2 Parent	49

Summary

This publication provides non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education. It has been produced to help practitioners make accurate judgements about each child's attainment during the early years foundation stage (EYFS) and local authorities (LAs) when exercising their function under the EYFS (Learning and Development Requirements) Order 2007, Section 4.2.

Expiry or review date

This guidance is relevant until the end of the 2016 to 2017 academic year.

Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for:

- early years and key stage 1 practitioners
- LAs
- headteachers and managers

Main points

This handbook gives guidance to help those completing and moderating EYFS profile judgements so that outcomes are accurate and consistent across all early years settings.

There are no changes from the previous version.

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

This handbook is produced by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA), an executive agency of the Department for Education (DfE), which is responsible for ensuring early years foundation stage (EYFS) profile outcomes are reliable as a result of robust moderation.

The EYFS profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the EYFS. It gives:

- the child's attainment in relation to the 17 early learning goals (ELG) descriptors
- a short narrative describing the child's 3 characteristics of effective learning

Practitioners' assessments are primarily based on observing a child's daily activities and events. In particular, practitioners should note the learning which a child demonstrates spontaneously, independently and consistently in a range of contexts.

Accurate assessment takes into account a range of perspectives. This should include those of the child, parents and other adults who have significant interactions with the child. The term 'parent' is defined in section 10.

The government does not prescribe how ongoing assessment should be undertaken. The EYFS profile is not intended to be used for ongoing assessment or for entry level assessment for early years settings or reception classes.

Practitioners

This handbook is to support practitioners in making accurate judgements about each child's attainment during the EYFS. It should be used alongside the EYFS profile [exemplification materials](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eyfs-profile-exemplification-materials)¹.

Together, the handbook and exemplification will help when making effective moderation judgements so that EYFS profile outcomes are accurate and consistent across all settings (as defined in section 10).

Local authorities

All English local authorities (LAs) must refer to this handbook, and any other guidance we produce, when exercising their function under the EYFS (Learning and Development

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/eyfs-profile-exemplification-materials

Requirements) Order 2007, Section 4.2. The learning and development requirements are given legal force by an Order made under Section 39(1) (a) of the Childcare Act 2006. This can be viewed on the government's [legislation archive](#)².

1.2 Statutory information

Practitioners and LAs involved in delivering the EYFS should be aware of, and refer to, the following information.

The Childcare Act Section 39(1) (a) 2006

This stipulates that early years providers must ensure that their provision meets the learning and development requirements as specified in the EYFS (Learning and Development Requirements) Order 2007 (amended in 2012). The Act states that this Order can specify the arrangements required for assessing children for the purpose of ascertaining what they have achieved in relation to the early learning goals (ELGs).

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage

The [EYFS framework](#)³ sets the statutory standards for the development, learning and care of children from birth to age 5.

Assessment and reporting arrangements

The [assessment and reporting arrangements](#)⁴ (ARA) for 2017 gives statutory guidance on making and moderating EYFS profile assessments.

Funding for statutory moderation

Each LA receives funding from the DfE in the form of a non-ring-fenced amount via the LA grants. LAs are responsible for dividing grants appropriately. STA does not hold information in relation to how much each LA is funded for their EYFS profile moderation activities.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/1772/article/3/made

³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/2017-early-years-foundation-stage-assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-ara

2. EYFS profile: purposes, principles and processes

2.1 Purposes and main uses

The statutory [EYFS framework](#)⁵ requires the EYFS profile assessment to be carried out in the final term of the year in which a child reaches age 5, and no later than 1 July in that term.

The main purpose of the EYFS profile is to provide a reliable, valid and accurate assessment of individual children at the end of the EYFS.

EYFS profile data is used to:

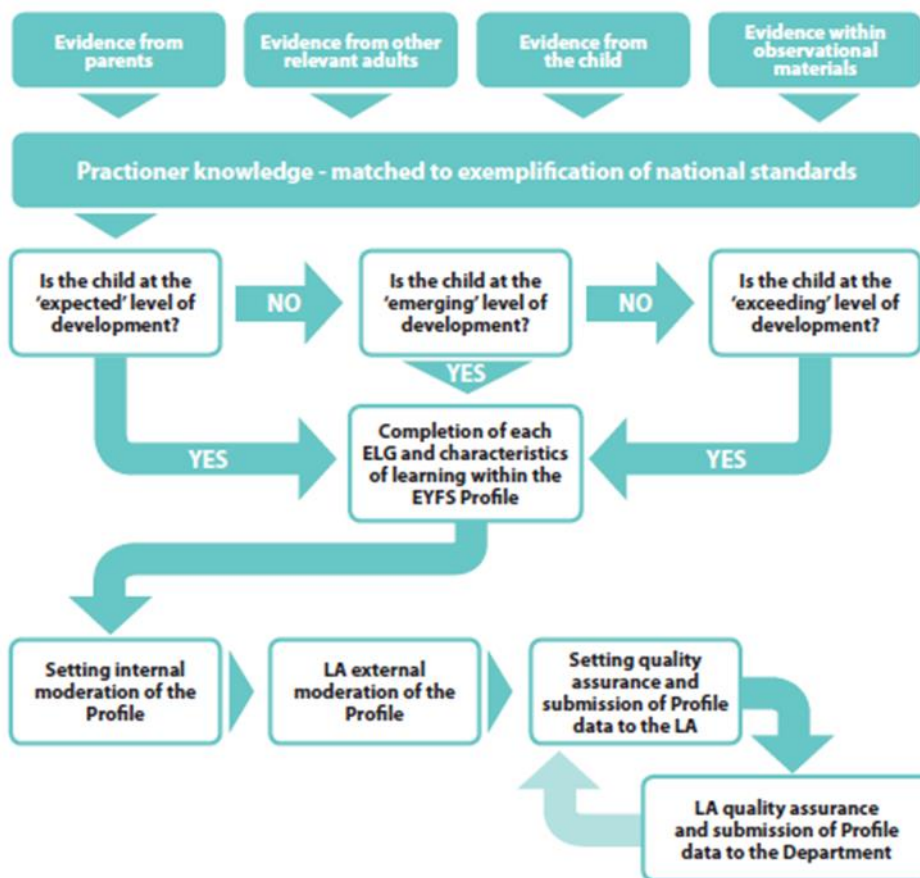
- inform parents about their child's development against the ELGs and the characteristics of their learning
- support a smooth transition to key stage 1 (KS1) by informing the professional dialogue between EYFS and KS1 teachers
- help year 1 teachers plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children

In addition, the EYFS profile provides an accurate national data set relating to levels of child development at the end of the EYFS. The DfE uses this to monitor changes in levels of children's development and their readiness for the next phase of their education both nationally and locally (school level results won't be published in the performance tables).

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

2.2 Principles of EYFS profile assessments

How an EYFS profile is completed



Reliable and accurate assessment at the end of the EYFS is underpinned by the following principles:

- Assessment is based primarily on the practitioner's knowledge of the child. Knowledge is gained predominantly from observation and interaction in a range of daily activities and events.
- Responsible pedagogy must be in place so that the provision enables each child to demonstrate their learning and development fully.
- Embedded learning is identified by assessing what a child can do consistently and independently in a range of everyday situations.
- An effective assessment presents a holistic view of a child's learning and development.
- Accurate assessments take account of contributions from a range of perspectives including the child, their parents and other relevant adults.

Observational assessment

Practitioners can use observational assessment to understand children's learning. Practitioners watch, listen and interact as children engage in everyday activities, events and experiences, and demonstrate their specific knowledge, skills and understanding.

Observational assessment is the most reliable way of building up an accurate picture of children's development and learning. This is especially true where the attainment demonstrated is not dependent on overt adult support. Observational assessment is central to understanding what children really know and can do.

Some observations will be planned but some may be a spontaneous capture of an important moment. It is likely that observations of everyday activities will provide evidence of attainment in more than one area of learning.

Observational assessment doesn't need prolonged breaks from interaction with children, or excessive written recording. It is likely to be interwoven with high quality interactions or conversations in words or sign language with children about their activities and current interests.

Responsible pedagogy

Responsible pedagogy enables each child to demonstrate learning in the fullest sense. It depends on the use of assessment information to plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child. Effective assessment can only take place when children have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding, learning and development in a range of contexts.

Children must have access to a rich learning environment where opportunities and conditions allow them to flourish in all aspects of their development. The learning environment should provide balance across the areas of learning. Integral to this is an ethos which:

- respects each child as an individual
- values children's efforts, interests and purposes as instrumental to successful learning

When practitioners are evaluating the effectiveness of their assessment processes they should consider:

- child development, both the biological and cultural aspects, and its impact on how learning may best be supported
- planning which ensures a relevant, motivating, flexible and interesting curriculum
- provision of an environment which truly enables successful learning by all children in their care

- the need for detailed understanding of the framework for assessment in order to gather accurate, reliable and meaningful information
- the importance of high quality adult interaction which is sensitive and adaptive to the needs of individual children and capable of promoting learning
- organisational aspects of provision, resources, curriculum and people

Successful implementation of these aspects of pedagogy and provision will enable practitioners to make an accurate, reliable and consistent assessment of children's learning. This will inform planning for year 1.

Child-initiated activity

Children with effective learning characteristics:

- are willing to have a go
- are involved and concentrating
- have their own ideas
- choose ways to do things
- find new ways of doing things
- enjoy achieving what they set out to do

To accurately assess these characteristics, practitioners need to observe learning which children have initiated rather than only focusing on what children do when prompted. Children need rich opportunities to initiate ideas and activities so that they can develop the learning characteristics which are assessed by the EYFS profile. These characteristics also support lifelong learning.

Embedded learning and secure development

Children can demonstrate embedded learning and secure development without the need for overt adult support. Where learning is secure it is likely that children often initiate the use of that learning. Practitioners will make judgements by observing behaviour that a child demonstrates consistently and independently in a range of situations. Attainment in this context will assure practitioners of the child's confidence and ownership of the specific knowledge, skill or concept being assessed. Skilful interactions with adults and learning which is supported by them are necessary on the journey to embedding skills and knowledge.

Links in the areas of learning

Areas of learning, and therefore the ELGs (Early Learning Goals), are often interlinked. These may also be related to the characteristics of effective learning. If practitioners can see these links it will join up the assessment process. Practitioners will be able to capture each child's learning more effectively and genuinely.

Practitioners can also reflect on these links when they quality assure their assessment judgements. They must consider where the different aspects and levels of attainment make sense when they are put together.

Practitioner knowledge

Most evidence for EYFS profile judgements will come from practitioners observing a child's self-initiated activities. Adult-led activities can offer insight into children's attainment. Make sure the child has the opportunity to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.

Much practitioner knowledge of what children know and can do will be gathered from day-to-day interactions. This isn't often formally recorded; however it:

- provides the basis for making judgements
- provides a focus for moderation dialogue
- informs future practice and provision

Contributions to the assessments

Accurate assessment will depend on contributions from a range of perspectives, including the child's. Practitioners should involve children fully in their own assessment by encouraging them to communicate about and review their own learning. Assessment should build on the insights of all adults who have significant interactions with the child. Adults with different roles will be able to make different contributions.

Accurate assessment requires a two-way flow of information between setting(s) and home. A review of a child's achievements should include those demonstrated at home. Assessments which don't include the parents' contribution give an incomplete picture of a child's learning and development. See section 10 for the definition of parent.

2.3 EYFS profile assessment processes

During the final year of the EYFS, practitioners must carry out ongoing (formative) assessment to support each child's learning and development. There is no requirement for how this is recorded or specifically when assessments take place. Practitioners should be mindful of their professional responsibility for the learning and development of children in their care and plan the provision needed to enable children to take the next steps in their learning.

In the final term of the EYFS practitioners must review information from all sources to make a judgement for each child, for each ELG. The judgement must say whether the child's learning and development is:

- best described by the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (expected)
- not yet at the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (emerging)
- beyond the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (exceeding)

Practitioners must refer to the [exemplification materials](#)⁶. These illustrate the standard expected for each ELG at the end of the EYFS.

Practitioners must consider the whole of each ELG when making their decision. They must avoid splitting the descriptor into sections and ‘ticking them off’. The most accurate picture of the child’s overall embedded learning will come from a holistic view of the descriptor.

Judging whether to use the ‘expected’ category

If the ELG description and accompanying exemplification best fit a practitioner’s professional knowledge of the child then their learning and development can be judged as ‘expected’.

However, children don’t necessarily achieve uniformly. Practitioners should judge whether the description within the ELG best fits the child’s learning and development, taking into account their relative strengths and weaknesses. ‘Best fit’ doesn’t mean that the child has equal mastery of all aspects of the ELG. Practitioners should look at the whole of each ELG description when making this summative judgement.

Practitioners should use the best-fit model to judge whether a child’s learning and development is ‘exceeding’. Practitioners will need to be confident that they have moved beyond the ‘expected’ level. When finalising judgements practitioners should:

- refer to the area of learning ‘exceeding’ descriptors which form part of this handbook
- discuss with year 1 teachers whether a child is ‘exceeding’ in any ELG

2.4 Evidence and documentation of the EYFS profile

Over the course of the year, practitioners should build their knowledge of what each child knows and can do. This will help them to make an accurate end of year judgement. They are not required or expected to carry out other assessments in addition to the EYFS profile.

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/eyfs-profile-exemplification-materials

Settings can record children's learning in any way which helps practitioners to support their learning and development and make accurate summative assessments.

Practitioners must make their final EYFS profile assessments based on all their evidence. 'Evidence' means any material, knowledge of the child, anecdotal incident or result of observation, or information from additional sources that supports the overall picture of a child's development. There is no requirement that evidence should be formally recorded or documented. Practitioners should keep paperwork to the minimum needed to illustrate, support and recall their knowledge of the child's attainment.

Practitioners may include the following to support their judgements:

- knowledge of the child
- materials which illustrate the child's learning journey, such as photographs
- observations of day to day interactions
- video, tape or electronic recordings
- the child's view of his or her own learning
- information from parents or other relevant adults

An EYFS profile completed by a practitioner alone only offers a partial picture of a child's attainment. Practitioners must actively engage children, their parents and other adults who have significant interaction with the child in the assessment process.

Practitioners should use their professional knowledge, and the exemplification of standards set out in this handbook, to judge whether a child's learning:

- meets the level expected at the end of the EYFS
- exceeds that level
- is best described as 'emerging'

Practitioners should also use the information in this handbook to help describe each child's characteristics of effective learning. Their judgements will be subject to moderation in order to ensure national consistency and accuracy.

2.5 Transition to year 1

Practitioners and year 1 teachers should work together to ensure that a child's transition between the EYFS and year 1 is seamless. Early years practitioners should make sure children's experiences in the final year of the EYFS are valuable in themselves, and prepare the ground for year 1. It is important that year 1 builds on the successful principles and approach encapsulated in the EYFS.

It is crucial that EYFS practitioners and year 1 teachers are given time to discuss and expand on the information presented in the EYFS profile.

In particular, the characteristic of effective learning narratives will give teachers significant details about each child's learning and development. The narratives must feature in conversations between practitioners and teachers.

Practitioners may provide additional information about each child's attainment to help teachers plan an effective curriculum and make provision for all children.

Decisions about this additional information should be made by each setting and reflect the characteristics and requirements of that setting. This will enable the year 1 teacher to have a fully rounded picture of the attainment of each child in order to plan the curriculum. Year 1 teachers should be involved in EYFS profile moderation so that they understand the judgements made by early years practitioners.

3. Inclusion and the EYFS profile

3.1 Overview

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) profile is an inclusive assessment, capable of capturing a wide range of children's learning and development outcomes. It may be challenging for practitioners to observe and assess some children. This challenge applies both to:

- understanding how some children might demonstrate attainment at the level expected at the end of the EYFS
- how to capture the attainment of children whose development is judged to be at the 'emerging' level

Practitioners must address this challenge in order for children's attainment to be accurately judged and recorded.

3.2 Taking account of the needs of individual children

Reaching accurate assessments using the EYFS profile requires practitioners to enable all children to reach their full potential. Consequently, practitioners must be alert to the general diversity of children's interests, needs and inclinations.

For instance, there may be children who are at an earlier stage of development than others in the cohort; some may have summer birthdays. These children may be highly active and more likely to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in situations which are sympathetic to this inclination. This will often be outdoors.

Practitioners should reflect on their observations and ensure that the provision enables all children, to demonstrate attainment in ways that are motivating to them. This should be regardless of their stage of development or interests, needs and inclinations.

3.3 Children with special educational needs and disability

Special educational needs and disability (SEND) includes physical, emotional, sensory and learning needs.

Settings will develop additional relationships with other professionals when working with children with SEND. It is vital that communication between all professionals and the child's parent (see section 10) is strong so that practitioners can get a clear picture of the child's learning and development.

Observational assessment (see section 2) is the most effective way of making judgements about all children's learning and development. P scales shouldn't be used for assessing children in the EYFS; they are an assessment tool designed for use at KS1.

Depending on their special educational need, children will demonstrate learning and development in different ways. Practitioners observing a child involved in day-to-day activities must be alert to their demonstrating attainment in a variety of ways, including eye pointing, use of symbols or signs. With the exception of ELG03 Speaking, where the EYFS profile contains the word 'talks' or 'speaks', children can use their established or preferred mode of communication.

Children should use the adaptations they normally use to carry out their activities so that practitioners come to know all children at their most capable. Adaptations include:

- mobility aids
- magnification
- adapted ICT and equipment

If a child's learning and development doesn't yet meet the description of the level expected at the end of the EYFS for an individual ELG, practitioners should record the outcome as 'emerging'. They should also record details of any specific assessment and provision in place for the child.

This will be used in discussions with parents so that they have a clear understanding of their child's development and any additional support which will be offered. Settings should also use the details to support planning for future learning.

3.4 Children for whom English is not their home language

The EYFS profile assessment is underpinned by an understanding that language is central to our sense of identity and belonging to a community. The profile recognises and values linguistic diversity.

The communication skills of children for whom English is not their home language will vary. However, learning English as an additional language (EAL) is not a special educational need.

Children will be at different stages of learning English and one or more other languages. Practitioners need to find out as much as they can about a child's prior language experience and any education they have received elsewhere. Parents as the first educators are an important source of information.

Practitioners may need to help parents understand that a child's home language development will help them learn English. Parents also need to know that it is perfectly acceptable, even desirable, for the child's home language to be used in the setting.

Practitioners will need to observe the child over time and raise questions with the parents, and/or bilingual support assistants, to be confident about what the child knows and understands.

The 3 aspects specific to the assessment of children for whom English is not their home language are:

- development in their home language
- development across areas of learning, assessed through their home language
- development of English

Within the EYFS profile, the ELGs for communication and language, and for literacy, must be assessed in relation to the child's competency in English. The remaining ELGs may be assessed in the context of any language – including their home language and English.

This has implications for provision. The principles of good practice for children learning English are the principles of good practice for all children. Children must have opportunities to engage in activities and first-hand experiences that do not depend solely on English for success. They must be able to participate in ways that reveal what they know and can do in the security of their home language. For children to grow in confidence, and hence demonstrate their embedded learning:

- their environment must reflect their cultural and linguistic heritage
- their learning be supported by a wide range of stimuli and experiences

3.5 Children from minority groups

The ethnicities of children within a setting can be diverse, particularly in urban settings. They may be refugees or asylum seekers, their families may have histories of persecution and trauma. Children may come from settled communities or travel frequently. They may have had a positive experience but their cultural conventions, for example governing behaviours or gender roles, may be different. Cultural background may also determine how early education is perceived. It may affect how much experience a child has had of school or other early years settings before their EYFS profile assessment.

Practitioners must take particular care to make sure the learning environment echoes children's positive experiences. They will be able to demonstrate their attainment best when opportunities such as role play, cookery, celebrations, visits to special places or events are linked to their cultural experience.

This will also be captured in the narrative relating to the 'Playing and exploring: using what they know in their play' characteristic of effective learning. This is where the child's ability to begin their play and exploration with things which are familiar to them is

expressly considered. The narrative also considers how well the child builds new knowledge and learning from this starting point.

A practitioner's relationship with parents is crucial to developing knowledge of the child and the practitioner's ability to make an accurate assessment. Parents can help practitioners understand the values that explain their child's responses to the environment and social situations. A child will find it easier to express their feelings and feel confident in their learning if practitioners listen and respond in ways that show understanding.

3.6 Transition conversations for children with an outcome at the 'emerging' level

Where children have an outcome of 'emerging' for an ELG, it is likely that this will not provide full information about their learning and development at the end of the EYFS. Additional information should be considered alongside EYFS profile outcomes. This will ensure conversations between EYFS and year 1 staff are meaningful so that the child makes a successful transition.

An outcome of 'emerging' may mask a wide range of levels of learning and development. The detail behind this outcome is built up over a period of time through observation, interaction with the child and ongoing assessment. There are many sources of information about how children learn and develop, how this may be demonstrated, and how further learning and development might be supported. Practitioners don't need to use any specific source of information in this context.

Specialist professional guidance is available for many specific special educational needs and disabilities. Children with SEND may have records from professionals within and outside of the setting. These records should inform assessment and transition processes. Wherever possible other professionals working with the child should be invited to contribute to transition conversations.

Settings should consider providing information in addition to the child's EYFS profile, to support their successful transition and ensure a smooth learning journey. Practitioners should think about what information could be useful for the child's new year 1 teacher before the summer term. This will allow processes to be built on a shared understanding and planned and implemented in good time. Decisions about what guidance might be used and what information might be shared should be made at a setting level. They should reflect local needs and circumstances.

4. Completing the EYFS profile

4.1 Overview

Practitioners must complete an EYFS profile for each child. This assessment takes place in the summer term of the academic year when a child reaches 5 years old.

In accordance with the statutory [EYFS framework](#)⁷ each child must be assessed against:

- the 17 ELGs
- the 3 characteristics of effective learning

The completed EYFS profile includes a short commentary on the child's skills and abilities in relation to the characteristics of effective learning.

4.2 Exceptions and exemptions

The EYFS profile should be completed during the summer term of the academic year in which a child reaches age 5 unless:

- the Secretary of State for Education has granted an exemption from the profile for the setting or an individual child
- the child is continuing in EYFS provision beyond the year in which they turn 5
- the child arrives from abroad within 2 weeks of the LA data submission date so a practitioner can't complete an accurate and valid assessment
- the child has spent a lengthy period of time away from the setting, for example, due to illness or medical treatment

Practitioners should refer to the [EYFS ARA](#)⁸ for information about what is required in these circumstances.

4.3 Making EYFS profile assessments

When assessing a child, practitioners will make judgements about his or her attainment and the nature of their learning characteristics by:

- taking into account evidence from a range of sources

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/publications/2017-early-years-foundation-stage-assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-ara

- matching their view of a child's attainment to the [exemplification of national standards](#)⁹, and the guidance on characteristics of effective learning (see section 4.5)

For each ELG, practitioners must judge whether a child is:

- meeting the level of development expected at the end of the reception year (expected)
- exceeding this level (exceeding) or
- not yet reaching this level (emerging)

Some children may have attended a range of settings during the final year of the EYFS. In these cases the EYFS profile must be completed by the provider where the child spends the majority of their time between 8am and 6pm.

4.4 Recording children's attainment

Practitioners should record each child's level of development against the 17 ELGs as 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. They must complete the profile with a brief commentary on the child's skills and abilities in relation to the 3 characteristics of effective learning outline in section 4.5.

4.5 Characteristics of effective learning

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. They are vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to year 1. The characteristics of effective learning run through and underpin all 7 areas of learning and development. They represent processes rather than outcomes.

Information about the child's characteristics of effective learning gives year 1 teachers vital background and context about their next stage of development and future learning needs.

The EYFS profile commentary should consist of a brief paragraph explaining how the child demonstrates:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

⁹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/eyfs-profile-exemplification-materials

Commentaries must reflect the practitioner's ongoing observation of the child within formative assessment processes. They should take account of all relevant records held by the setting and include information from the child, their parents (see section 10) and other relevant adults.

The characteristics of effective learning are described below. This handbook includes some possible lines of enquiry which can be used when completing the commentary for each characteristic.

Playing and exploring – engagement

'Finding out and exploring' is concerned with the child's open-ended hands-on experiences which result from innate curiosity. These experiences provide raw sensory material from which the child builds concepts, tests ideas and finds out.

'Using what they know in their play' describes how children use play to bring together their current understandings, combining, refining and exploring their ideas in imaginative ways. Representing experiences through imaginative play supports the development of narrative thought, the ability to see from other perspectives, and symbolic thinking.

'Being willing to have a go' refers to the child:

- finding an interest
- initiating activities
- seeking challenge
- having a 'can do' attitude
- being willing to take a risk in new experiences
- developing the view that failures are opportunities to learn

Active learning – motivation

'Being involved and concentrating' describes the intensity of attention that arises from children engaged in following a line of interest in their activities.

'Keeping on trying' refers to:

- the importance of persistence even in the face of challenge or difficulties
- an element of purposeful control which supports resilience

'Enjoying achieving what they set out to do' builds on the intrinsic motivation which supports long-term success. It refers to the reward of meeting one's own goals, rather than relying on the approval of others.

Creating and thinking critically

‘Having their own ideas’ covers the critical area of creativity - generating new ideas and approaches in all areas of endeavour. Being inventive allows children to find new problems as they seek challenge, and to explore ways of solving these.

‘Using what they already know to learn new things’ refers to the way children use narrative and scientific modes of thought to:

- develop and link concepts
- find meaning in sequence, cause and effect
- find meaning in the intentions of others

‘Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways’ involves children in:

- approaching goal-directed activity in organised ways
- making choices and decisions about how to approach tasks
- planning and monitoring what to do and being able to change strategies

4.6 Reporting the EYFS profile assessment

EYFS providers must give parents:

- a written summary of their child’s attainment against the 17 ELGs
- a short commentary on how their child demonstrates the 3 characteristics of effective learning

Providers must give year 1 teachers:

- a copy of the child’s EYFS profile
- a short commentary on how the child demonstrates the 3 characteristics of effective learning

Providers must report EYFS profile data (the 17 ELGs) to their LA for each child, upon request. The narrative on how a child demonstrates the 3 characteristics of effective learning shouldn’t be submitted.

If a child starts at a new setting before the summer half-term holiday, the new setting must report the child’s results to the LA. If a child changes setting during the second half of the summer term then the previous setting is responsible for reporting to the LA. Providers should consider all available records of any formal or informal discussions with parents and others involved with the child during the previous year.

Reports should be specific to the child, concise and informative. They may include details from ongoing assessment and details from any other assessments appropriate to the individual child in order to help to identify the appropriate next steps in learning.

The [EYFS ARA](#)¹⁰ details requirements around completion of the profile, and reporting and informing parents about their child's progress.

¹⁰ www.gov.uk/government/publications/2017-early-years-foundation-stage-assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-ara

5. Exemplification of early years foundation stage profile

5.1 Exemplification materials

The [exemplification materials](#)¹¹ establish the national standard for the level of learning and development expected at the end of the EYFS. There are materials for each of the 17 ELGs of the EYFS profile.

The materials provide a single point of reference for:

- practitioners to make accurate judgements for each child's attainment
- moderators to assess the accuracy of practitioner judgements
- year 1 teachers to use EYFS profile outcomes to plan effective provision
- other stakeholders who wish to evaluate children's learning and development

There is no prescribed method of gathering evidence as a foundation for EYFS profile judgements. The exemplification includes a variety of evidence and forms of presentation to demonstrate some of the ways in which information may be gathered. The materials include:

- 'one off' observations
- samples of children's work
- photographs
- contributions from parents

Practitioners will also build up a significant professional knowledge of each child. This won't be recorded but it must be considered when EYFS profile judgements are made.

5.2 Using the exemplification materials

Practitioners should use the exemplification materials to ensure their judgements are accurate and consistent by considering each child's learning and development in the light of:

- the area of learning
- the level of development expected at the end of EYFS for each ELG, informed by the exemplification

¹¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/eyfs-profile-exemplification-materials

It is important to understand that each set as a whole illustrates the 'expected' descriptor. The information illustrates the pitch and breadth of a particular 'expected' level of learning and development. No one piece of evidence meets the ELG as a standalone item.

Practitioners should always view exemplification materials in the context of a specific aspect of learning in order to retain an accurate focus. However, they should remember that a child's learning and development are not compartmentalised; focusing on one aspect of learning will shed light on several other related areas.

6. Early learning goals

The ELGs are listed below. A child can use their established or preferred mode of communication for all the ELGs except Speaking. In this case practitioners should give additional detail about the child's understanding and preferred means of communication in their EYFS profile record.

6.1 Prime areas of learning and their associated ELGs

Communication and language development

This involves giving children opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves.

ELG 01 Listening and attention: children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.

ELG 02 Understanding: children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

ELG 03 Speaking: children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

Physical development

This involves providing opportunities for children to be active and interactive, and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

ELG 04 Moving and handling: children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

ELG 05 Health and self-care: children know the importance for good health of physical exercise, and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe. They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet independently.

Personal, social and emotional development

This involves helping children to:

- develop a positive sense of themselves and others
- form positive relationships and develop respect for others
- develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings
- understand appropriate behaviour in groups
- have confidence in their own abilities

ELG 06 Self-confidence and self-awareness: children are confident about trying new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident speaking in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help.

ELG 07 Managing feelings and behaviour: children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride.

ELG 08 Making relationships: children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children.

6.2 Specific areas of learning and their associated ELGs

Literacy

This involves encouraging children to read and write, both through listening to others reading, and being encouraged to begin to read and write themselves. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials such as books, poems, and other written materials to ignite their interest.

ELG 09 Reading: children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.

ELG 10 Writing: children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

Mathematics

This involves providing children with opportunities to:

- practise and improve their skills in counting numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems
- describe shapes, spaces, and measures

ELG 11 Numbers: children count reliably with numbers from 1 to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract 2 single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing.

ELG 12 Shape, space and measures: children use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems. They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them.

Understanding of the world

This involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

ELG 13 People and communities: children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.

ELG 14 The world: children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.

ELG 15 Technology: children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.

Expressive arts and design

This involves supporting children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. It involves providing children with opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role play, and design and technology.

ELG 16 Exploring and using media and materials: children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.

ELG 17 Being imaginative: children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role-play and stories.

7. Moderation of the EYFS profile

7.1 Purpose of moderation

LAs are responsible for providing a robust moderation process so that practitioners' judgements are evaluated in line with statutory requirements.

Moderation of the EYFS profile:

- secures the consistency and accuracy of judgements made by different practitioners
- reassures practitioners that their judgements are accurate, valid and consistent with national standards
- assures moderators that an acceptable level of accuracy and validity has been achieved for assessments recorded and reported by the settings for which they have responsibility

Moderation of the EYFS profile is a sampling process and unlike testing. It is not a method for checking each child's attainment. LA moderation visits check practitioners' ability to make accurate assessments and apply them consistently.

Moderation involves both internal moderation activities and professional dialogue between moderators and practitioners. This ensures that:

- practitioners' judgements are comparable and consistent with national standards
- the assessment process is reliable, accurate and secure

7.2 Internal moderation

Moderation of EYFS profile assessments begins within each individual setting. It is supported by LAs or LA-approved agencies through a programme of visits and meetings.

Within each setting, practitioners can informally agree assessment judgements with others, for example discussing an observation about a child's development with a year 1 teacher.

Staff meetings or training days can be an opportunity for more formal agreement processes. For example practitioners could discuss planned paired observations or the development of a group of children in relation to one of the ELGs. The focus for planned work should be clear and manageable. LA external moderators will support this work during visits or meetings.

7.3 Inter-school moderation

It is important for practitioners to build a shared understanding of the ELGs and the national exemplification of standards. They should have opportunities to discuss their assessment of children's attainment with colleagues against the national standard. Settings should work together so that practitioners can share experiences and develop their assessment skills. Outcomes of discussions could be recorded and referenced during moderation visits.

7.4 Local authority moderation

Responsibilities

Section 13 of the Childcare Act 2006 requires LAs to undertake moderation activity, including:

- recruiting and training moderators with appropriate experience of the EYFS and the ELGs to secure consistent standards in assessment judgements
- regularly visiting all providers as part of a cycle of moderation visits
- moderating EYFS profile assessment judgements
- notifying providers about whether they are carrying out the EYFS profile assessment in accordance with requirements

LA moderators must have regard for moderation guidance produced by STA and exercise their powers and duties according to the guidance. This can be found in the 'Moderating the EYFS profile' section of the [EYFS ARA](#)¹².

If LA moderators choose to use a moderation model which isn't reliant on moderation visits, they must be able to demonstrate that all the statutory elements of the moderation visit are protected. Any deviation which doesn't have regard to our guidance will be deemed as not meeting statutory requirements.

LAs must moderate all 17 ELGs annually in a minimum of 25% of all settings which implement the EYFS profile.

Visits will take place on a 4 year cycle within each LA.

Moderation focuses on a professional dialogue between moderators and practitioners. It involves a suitably experienced and trained moderator, who is external and independent

¹² www.gov.uk/government/publications/2017-early-years-foundation-stage-assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-ara

to the setting, validating practitioners' judgements. LA external moderators will seek to confirm that:

- practitioners' judgements are consistent with the national exemplification of standards
- practitioners' assessments of children's attainment are reliable, accurate and secure

LA external moderators may judge that assessments aren't in line with the exemplified standards. If so, they can require the provider to:

- arrange for the practitioner to take part in further training or moderation activities
- reconsider their assessments as advised by the LA external moderator

The [EYFS ARA](#)¹³ gives specific guidance about moderation measurements, including requirements for academies.

How local authorities are moderated

STA visits a sample of LAs during the summer term, to moderate their approaches and procedures.

If an LA is selected, external moderators will:

- meet with their EYFS profile moderation manager and appropriate personnel to discuss the approaches to moderation, training and support
- attend one or more of their moderation visits
- report to STA on their approach to moderation and the robustness of the moderation model they use

Carrying out moderation activity

LAs should inform settings that are to receive an EYFS profile moderation visit by the end of the spring term. These settings will need to complete interim judgements against all the ELGs at the beginning of May for children in the final year of the EYFS. Individual settings can be added to the LA sample after this date, if particular issues arise.

The moderation sample

Moderators must review a sample of completed EYFS profiles.

¹³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/2017-early-years-foundation-stage-assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-ara

In single-form entry schools LAs will moderate 17 ELGs from one practitioner. They should expect to see some 'emerging', some 'expected' and some 'exceeding' outcomes from across the 5 children.

In a multi-form entry school LAs should ensure that all 17 ELGs are moderated. They should see at least one judgement at each of the 3 outcome levels from each practitioner within the sample.

They must establish whether practitioners have made an accurate judgement based on correct understanding of:

- what constitutes an appropriate outcome
- the thresholds between the outcomes

If the LA moderator isn't confident in a practitioner's judgements they may increase the sample of completed profiles they look at. LA moderators must make sure they see enough profiles to be confident about the practitioner's accuracy.

There may be some overlap to confirm accuracy of judgements, for example ELG 02: Understanding may be scrutinised at 'expected' in one class and 'exceeding' in another.

Where practitioners are released for parts of the moderation visit, it may be helpful for one member of staff to be present for the whole of the visit.

Moderating children in the 'emerging' band

Where a practitioner's judgements are that the child is at an 'emerging' level of development, the moderation dialogue must reference both the description of the expected level of development (the ELG) and the child's previous development continuum. This is so the moderator can evaluate the practitioner's understanding and application of the threshold between an 'emerging' and 'expected' outcome. Evaluation must be applied on an individual ELG basis.

An outcome of 'emerging' may be clear-cut so that only a limited moderation dialogue is needed to establish the accuracy of a best-fit judgement. Alternatively, a child's specific circumstances may mean their development doesn't follow a linear path. Making a best-fit judgement about the child's level of learning and development may be both difficult and of limited meaning.

In these situations, discussion between a moderator and practitioner may be especially helpful. The moderation process should aim to ensure that the characteristic of effective learning narrative highlights aspects of the child's learning and development which may be masked by the 17 ELG outcomes.

Children with special educational needs and disability (SEND)

These children will be at the 'expected' or 'exceeding' level of development for some ELGs. However they will be at an 'emerging' level for ELGs where their specific condition has an impact on their learning and development. Practitioners should provide additional detail to support the child's successful transition to year 1 and enable the year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum.

If moderators consider this information within a moderation dialogue it will strengthen the outcome of moderation. Dialogue will focus on the holistic picture of the child and the professional knowledge of the practitioner. It will also help to develop a shared understanding of how the EYFS profile can be used to support successful transition for children with SEND.

Children whose outcomes are all 'emerging'

There will be children whose outcomes at the end of the EYFS are at the 'emerging' level for all ELGs. It is important that moderation of this pattern of outcomes is also a meaningful process.

Moderating children in the 'exceeding' band

Where a practitioner's judgements are that the child is at an 'exceeding' level of development, the moderation dialogue must reference the:

- description of the expected level of development (the ELG)
- area of learning 'exceeding' descriptors included in this handbook

The moderation process must be applied on an individual ELG basis as children may be at an 'exceeding' level for some ELGs but at 'expected' for others.

8. Quality assurance of EYFS profile data

8.1 Overview

The EYFS profile is a statutory data collection. Each child's records are combined at setting, LA and national level to produce a dataset which has national statistics status and informs a range of processes.

Practitioners, school managers, setting leaders and LAs are responsible for ensuring the quality, accuracy and reliability of data arising from EYFS profile assessment.

EYFS profile data must be sufficiently reliable and accurate to meet the purposes described in this handbook. Quality assurance activities are in place to check this is the case. These include:

- teachers and practitioners meeting within a school and between schools or settings, to develop a consistent understanding of ELGs
- external moderation visits organised by a LA
- LAs carrying out a quality assurance review of settings' data after it has been submitted

Quality assurance of EYFS profile data ensures that:

- the pattern of outcomes for an individual child makes sense in relation to wider knowledge of children's learning and development
- the resulting data is an accurate record of practitioner judgements

8.2 Pattern of outcomes for an individual child

LAs are responsible for providing a robust moderation process which evaluates practitioners' judgements in line with statutory requirements. This process includes LA moderators considering the pattern of attainment for a sample of children during a moderation visit.

It is important that settings carry out a 'sense check' of outcomes for all children for whom they have made EYFS profile judgements. This helps to make sure parents and year 1 teachers are given an accurate picture of their learning and development.

Consideration of any EYFS profile outcome must include:

- the judgements made against the ELG statement of the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS
- the narrative record of the child's characteristics of effective learning

Practitioners should use the information in the narrative to put patterns of attainment in context and evaluate the accuracy of EYFS profile outcomes.

Any exploration of patterns of attainment should take into account the contextual information for individual children which underpin accurate assessment. For example you should remember that children with specific educational needs and development may be assessed in relation to their ability to communicate without the need for speech.

LAs can use the statements set out in section 7.5 to support level setting quality assurance processes.

8.3 Schools and settings' responsibilities

Headteachers and managers

Headteachers are responsible for submitting accurate, reliable and high quality EYFS profile data to their LA. To achieve this, headteachers need to make sure that:

- staff understand their setting's systems for recording children's profile outcomes and submitting data to their LA
- practitioners clearly record EYFS profile information
- staff responsible for data collection and submission understand the nature of EYFS profile data
- data is transcribed from their setting's records to electronic records accurately
- entered data is checked against what was originally provided by the practitioner
- information which accompanies EYFS profile data is accurate, for example postcode and unique pupil number (UPN)
- headteachers themselves check and sign-off data before it is submitted to their LA

Headteachers should also be involved in quality assurance processes before data is submitted to their LA. They should make sure their staff has enough time for resolving queries.

Headteachers should only sign off item level data, and permit onward transmission to their LA, once they have checked that the data is:

- free of errors
- an accurate reflection of the attainment of the cohort

Headteachers are also responsible for resolving any queries their LA may have as a result of their processes.

Practitioners and year 1 teachers

Practitioners have a central role in ensuring judgements are reliable and accurate. They need to be familiar with the ELGs and their exemplification in order to apply them consistently.

Practitioners and year 1 teachers should work together to build a consistent, shared understanding of what the ELGs mean via internal moderation activities. Practitioners in groups of schools may also wish to work together in this way.

It is particularly important that year 1 teachers understand the EYFS profile, so that they can make effective use of it to inform their teaching. Year 1 teachers should be encouraged to be moderators.

8.4 Local authority responsibilities

Data collection

The data collection, entry and submission processes should be planned in advance. LAs should give clear information to settings so that they understand how data should be formatted.

Quality assurance of data

LAs should scrutinise the validity and accuracy of EYFS profile data before they submit it to the DfE. The dataset should be checked by moderation and data professionals. Each team's focus may be different, but best practice involves combined processes with shared responsibility.

Effective quality assurance rests on LAs' knowledge both of EYFS profile assessment and of the schools and settings which are returning data. LA quality assurance activity could include a 'first cut' data analysis followed by feedback to the setting. This can help a setting's internal evaluation and transition processes.

LAs should explain their quality assurance processes to settings early in the data collection cycle. This will ensure timescales and expectations are well established, and appropriate activity planned at setting and LA level. Timelines should allow time for:

- scrutiny of data by LA data and moderation teams
- queries to be raised with settings and resolved
- settings to amend submitted data, if required

If LAs find potential inconsistencies in a setting's dataset, they must ensure headteachers and managers have enough time to discuss this with their staff and provide an appropriate response. If settings need to change their data this must be completed

before the end of the summer term. Moderation managers must co-ordinate with their data teams so that the final submission to the DfE only contains correctly amended data.

LAs can use the following questions to check the accuracy of their EYFS profile dataset before they submit it to the DfE. These questions are designed to prompt conversation rather than rules which data must obey.

- Does the setting's data reflect the LA's knowledge of the cohort or outcomes of moderation?
- Is there a difference in data between classes where there is multiple form entry?
- Is the setting's data significantly or unexpectedly adrift from LA data?
- Are there patterns of attainment which are unexpected in terms of what is known about children's learning and development in general?
- Are trends from year to year unexpected?

LAs should submit data to the DfE using the COLLECT data collection system. The DfE will give instructions on how to do this before the national data collection takes place. Data must pass a range of validation checks in order to be accepted by the DfE.

After data validation has taken place, LA moderation managers should check that their local dataset presents an accurate picture of children's learning and development at the end of the EYFS. LAs could do this by looking at a further sample of outcomes, or cross checking outcomes against those anticipated as a result of moderation. The nature of any sampling should be shared with settings prior to data collection.

8.5 Statements to support level setting

Each child's pattern of attainment will reflect their learning and development outcomes so an unexpected pattern of attainment doesn't necessarily mean that their EYFS profile outcome is inaccurate. These prompts may provide a starting point for a conversation with the practitioner who made the judgement, if a pattern doesn't match what was anticipated.

Statement 1

A child's outcomes consistently exceed the ELGs but the characteristics of effective learning describe a child who lacks interest and excitement to learn. This scenario is possible; however high attainment is often associated with interest in learning. It is essential that the commentary within the characteristics of effective learning is linked to the attainment of the ELGs.

Statement 2

A child's ability to communicate effectively threads through many of the ELGs. A child whose outcome for 'Speaking' is at the 'emerging' level may also show emerging attainment for those ELGs with a significant communication element.

These include:

- self-confidence and self-awareness
- managing feelings and behaviour
- understanding
- shape, space and measures
- people and communities
- knowledge of the world

Statement 3

A child meets the level of development expected at the end of EYFS for 'Reading' but not for 'Listening and attention'. This is despite the 'Reading' ELG including elements which rely on a child using significant skills relating to 'Listening and attention'.

Statement 4

A child meets the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS for 'Writing' but not physical development ('Moving and handling'). The ability to hold and manipulate a pencil effectively is only part of the physical ELG. Therefore a child whose physical development in relation to fine motor movements is at the 'emerging' level may not be a confident and independent writer as expressed by the 'Writing' ELG.

Statement 5

Some elements of the expressive arts ELGs depend on a child's physical ability to explore and manipulate media with confidence, including construction materials. A child with emerging physical ('Moving and handling') skills may not attain the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS in relation to these creative ELGs.

Statement 6

A child who is at the 'expected' level for 'Shape, space and measures' and 'Knowledge of the world' is likely to be using the skills and attributes which would contribute towards attainment of the 'expected' level for 'Understanding'.

9. Areas of learning: ‘exceeding’ descriptors

Practitioners should use these descriptors when making judgements about whether a child’s level of learning and development is in the ‘exceeding’ category. These descriptors are sourced from the [Tickell review](#)¹⁴ of the EYFS.

9.1 Prime areas of learning

Communication and language

Early learning goal	Description of ‘exceeding’
1. Listening and attention	Children listen to instructions and follow them accurately, asking for clarification if necessary. They listen attentively with sustained concentration to follow a story without pictures or props. They can listen in a larger group, for example, at assembly.
2. Understanding	After listening to stories children can express views about events or characters in the story and answer questions about why things happened. They can carry out instructions which contain several parts in a sequence.
3. Speaking	Children show some awareness of the listener by making changes to language and non-verbal features. They recount experiences and imagine possibilities, often connecting ideas. They use a range of vocabulary in imaginative ways to add information, express ideas or to explain or justify actions or events.

¹⁴ www.gov.uk/government/collections/tickell-review-reports

Physical development

Early learning goal	Description of 'exceeding'
4. Moving and handling	Children can hop confidently and skip in time to music. They hold paper in position and use their preferred hand for writing, using a correct pencil grip. They are beginning to be able to write on lines and control letter size.
5. Health and self-care	Children know about, and can make healthy choices in relation to, healthy eating and exercise. They can dress and undress independently, successfully managing fastening buttons or laces.

Personal, social and emotional development

Early learning goal	Description of 'exceeding'
6. Self-confidence and self-awareness	Children are confident speaking to a class group. They can talk about the things they enjoy, and are good at, and about the things they do not find easy. They are resourceful in finding support when they need help or information. They can talk about the plans they have made to carry out activities and what they might change if they were to repeat them.
7. Managing feelings and behaviour	Children know some ways to manage their feelings and are beginning to use these to maintain control. They can listen to each other's suggestions and plan how to achieve an outcome without adult help. They know when and how to stand up for themselves appropriately. They can stop and think before acting and they can wait for things they want.
8. Making relationships	Children play group games with rules. They understand someone else's point of view can be different from theirs. They resolve minor disagreements through listening to each other to come up with a fair solution. They understand what bullying is and that this is unacceptable behaviour.

9.2 Specific areas of learning

Literacy

Early learning goal	Description of 'exceeding'
9. Reading	Children can read phonically regular words of more than 1 syllable as well as many irregular but high frequency words. They use phonic, semantic and syntactic knowledge to understand unfamiliar vocabulary. They can describe the main events in the simple stories they have read.
10. Writing	Children can spell phonically regular words of more than 1 syllable as well as many irregular but high frequency words. They use key features of narrative in their own writing.

Mathematics

Early learning goal	Description of 'exceeding'
11. Numbers	Children estimate a number of objects and check quantities by counting up to 20. They solve practical problems that involve combining groups of 2, 5 or 10, or sharing into equal groups.
12. Shape, space and measures	Children estimate, measure, weigh and compare and order objects and talk about properties, position and time.

Understanding the world

Early learning goal	Description of 'exceeding'
13. People and communities	Children know the difference between past and present events in their own lives and some reasons why people's lives were different in the past. They know that other children have different likes and dislikes and that they may be good at different things. They understand that different people have different beliefs, attitudes, customs and traditions and why it is important to treat them with respect.
14. The world	Children know that the environment and living things are influenced by human activity. They can describe some actions which people in their own community do that help to maintain the area they live in. They know the properties of some materials and can suggest some of the purposes they are used for. They are familiar with basic scientific concepts such as floating, sinking, experimentation.
15. Technology	Children find out about and use a range of everyday technology. They select appropriate applications that support an identified need, for example in deciding how best to make a record of a special event in their lives, such as a journey on a steam train.

Expressive arts and design

Early learning goal	Description of 'exceeding'
16. Exploring and using media and materials	Children develop their own ideas through selecting and using materials and working on processes that interest them. Through their explorations they find out and make decisions about how media and materials can be combined and changed.
17. Being imaginative	Children talk about the ideas and processes which have led them to make music, designs, images or products. They can talk about features of their own and others' work, recognising the differences between them and the strengths of others.

10. Completing commentaries for the characteristics of effective learning

10.1 Example lines of enquiry

Playing and exploring – engagement

‘Finding out and exploring’ is concerned with children’s open-ended hands-on experiences. These result from innate curiosity and provide the raw sensory material from which the child builds concepts, tests ideas and finds things out.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child respond to first hand experiences in an exploratory way?
- How does the child demonstrate natural curiosity?
- Does the child notice patterns, changes, similarities and differences when exploring across the curriculum?

‘Using what they know in their play’ describes how children use play to bring together their current understandings, combining, refining and exploring their ideas in imaginative ways. Representing experiences through imaginative play supports the development of narrative thought, the ability to see from other perspectives, and symbolic thinking.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- In what ways does the child use what he or she discovers in play and links it to existing knowledge?
- Can the child combine, refine and explore ideas in imaginative ways?
- Can the child see things from other perspectives?

‘Being willing to have a go’ refers to the child finding an interest, initiating activities, seeking challenge, having a ‘can do’ orientation, being willing to take a risk in new experiences, and developing the view of failures as opportunities to learn.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child initiate activities around own interests?
- Does the child seek challenges and take risks in new experiences?
- Does the child learn from mistakes without becoming disheartened?

Active learning - motivation

‘Being involved and concentrating’ describes the intensity of attention that arises from children concentrating on following a line of interest in their activities.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- To what extent does the child become completely focussed in activities and experiences and not easily distracted?
- To what extent does the child show intensity of attention for example by being concerned about details in activities, experiences and ideas?

‘Keeping on trying’ refers to the importance of persistence even in the face of challenge or difficulties, an element of purposeful control which supports resilience.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child pursue a particular line of interest in an activity?
- Does the child demonstrate persistence in the face of difficulty or a challenge?
- Can the child refocus and re-plan to overcome difficulties, setbacks and disappointments?
- Does the child know how to seek appropriate help in terms of materials, tools and other people?

‘Enjoying achieving what they set out to do’ refers to the reward of meeting one’s own goals, building on the intrinsic motivation which supports long-term success, rather than relying on the approval of others.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child become involved in activities and experiences which arise out of personal interest, curiosity and enquiry?
- Does the child demonstrate satisfaction when engaged in and completing personal endeavours?

Creating and thinking critically

‘Having their own ideas’ covers the critical area of creativity – generating new ideas and approaches in all areas of endeavour. Being inventive allows children to find new problems as they seek challenge, and to explore ways of solving these.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child generate new ideas during activities?
- Does the child adapt, refine or make changes when previous ideas were unsuccessful or could be developed?
- Is the child inventive in solving problems, using and synthesising knowledge and skills across areas of learning?

‘Using what they know to learn new things’ refers to the way in which children develop and link concepts, find meaning in sequence, cause and effect and in the intentions of others through both narrative and scientific modes of thought.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child talk about or explore the idea of cause and effect through actions?
- Does the child use acquired knowledge and skills to explore new learning across and within areas of learning?
- Does the child offer ideas of why things happen and how things work or show this in exploratory play?

‘Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways’ involves approaching goal-directed activity in organised ways, making choices and decisions about how to approach tasks, planning and monitoring what to do and being able to change strategies.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child explore ways of solving new problems including trial and error?
- Is the child able to plan and monitor what has been done?
- Can the child change strategies when appropriate?

11. Definitions

11.1 Settings

All references to EYFS settings include any out-of-home provider of early years provision for children from birth to 5 years, for example:

- all providers registered with a childminder agency
- all providers on the early years register (for example nurseries and childminders)
- maintained schools, non-maintained schools and independent schools with early years provision

11.2 Parent

The term 'parent' is used here as defined in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 as:

- parents of a child
- any person who is not a parent of a child but who has parental responsibility for the child
- any person who has care of the child



Standards
& Testing
Agency

© Crown copyright 2016

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3

email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

enquiries www.education.gov.uk/contactus

download www.gov.uk/government/publications

Reference: STA/16/7838/e

978-1-78644-538-4



Follow us on Twitter:
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:
facebook.com/educationgovuk